

THE
Connecticut Common School Journal
AND
ANNALS OF EDUCATION.

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ORAL TEACHING.

NOT many years ago, it was a practice, nearly universal, in schools, to conduct all recitations in strict accordance with the text of the book; the teacher asking the questions, and the pupil giving the answer, as printed in the book. To some extent, the same course is pursued in many schools at the present time, but far less so than formerly. Where it has been adopted, it has been found that scholars often learned words, without gaining any clear or well-defined ideas. The leading educationists directed attention to the error, and lecturers and writers did what they could to bring the old method of teaching into disrepute. They declaimed and wrote against it, and contended strongly and wisely for a change. But in education, as in other concerns, "one extreme is very apt to follow another." In advocating the importance of oral teaching, some went too far, and gave undue prominence to the subject. Some teachers were made to believe and to act as though oral teaching was the only true method, and that text-books were to be almost, if not altogether, discarded. But the wise and judicious educator will readily see that this would be an error quite as great as the former; that its tendency would be to relieve the pupil from true mental discipline, and weaken his self-reliance.

The true plan consists in a medium course, or in a blending of the two; and those teachers will be the most successful, who unite the

two in proper proportions. The objection to the old plan was not so much to the use of the text-book, as to the improper use of it. The book should be used by the pupil, and its contents be learned; and the important truths and principles of each lesson should, if possible, be comprehended; and if they are clearly understood, they can be, and should be, clearly expressed. In order that the scholar's knowledge of a lesson may be known, the teacher should freely use the oral method, and ask such questions as will tend to test thoroughly the scholar's understanding. In conducting recitations, he should not confine his attention to the mere questions of the book. He should rather aim to have a fresh and clear understanding of the lesson under consideration, so that he may be able to conduct the recitation without any reference to the words of the book. The skillful teacher, who feels an interest in the subject, will be ready to ask many incidental questions, which will tend both to elicit the scholar's knowledge of the direct subject, and also to awaken new thoughts, and induce him to think and investigate.

Even the simplest questions in Geography, Grammar, &c., may be expanded, and made suggestive of other questions; and the oral teaching should mainly be directed to an expansion of the subject. The first question in Geography is, usually, "What is Geography?" and the answer is, "A description of the earth." And yet how few scholars, who were taught according to the verbatim plan of the text-book, gained any well-defined knowledge of the subject? They could give answers, but they had but little real or available knowledge. But let the teacher ask additional questions, which will tend to awaken thought, and lead the pupil to a thorough understanding of the subject in all its connections, and a new interest will be thrown around it.

If the lesson is in Arithmetic, and some particular rule is under consideration, let the teacher propose questions of his own preparation, designed to elucidate the subject, and to test the scholar's comprehension. For instance, if the subject of Interest is before a class, and sufficient time and attention have been given to the general principles, let the teacher step to the blackboard, and write a note in due form, and request the class to tell what amount will cancel the note at that very time. And so with every lesson—let there be some "off-hand" questions proposed by the teacher, and it will do much to add interest to the lesson, and at the same time awaken thought in the right way, and in the right direction.

In conclusion, we would say to teachers—neither discard nor

adopt either method exclusively, but seek rather to combine the two in the most judicious manner; ever aiming to promote the true intellectual and moral growth of your pupils, and so to discipline them that they may take intelligent and comprehensive views of every subject that may come before them. In other words, teach them to examine, to investigate, to think, to understand.

THE SPECTACLE OF THE HEAVENS.

[The oration of the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT, delivered at the inauguration of the Dudley Astronomical Observatory, Albany, was a splendid and eloquent performance. The following extract, portraying the approach of the morning, is of unsurpassed beauty.—*Res. Ed.*]

"MUCH as we are indebted to our observatories for elevating our conceptions of the heavenly bodies, they present, even to the unaided sight, scenes of glory which words are too feeble to describe. I had occasion, a few weeks since, to take the early train from Providence to Boston, and for this purpose rose at two o'clock in the morning. Everything around was wrapped in darkness, and hushed in silence, broken only by, what seemed at that hour, the unearthly clank and rush of the train. It was a mild, serene, midsummer's night; the sky was without a cloud—the winds were whist. The moon, then in the last quarter, had just risen; and the stars shone with a spectral luster but little affected by her presence. Jupiter, two hours high, was the herald of the day: the Pleiades, just above the horizon, shed their sweet influence in the east: Lyra sparkled near the zenith: Andromeda veiled her newly-discovered glories from the naked eye, in the south: the steady Pointers, far beneath the pole, looked meekly up from the depths of the north to their sovereign.

"Such was the glorious spectacle, as I entered the train. As we proceeded, the timid approach of twilight became more perceptible. The intense blue of the sky began to soften; the smaller stars, like little children, went first to rest; the sister beams of the Pleiades soon melted together; but the bright constellations of the west and north remained unchanged. Steadily the wondrous transfiguration went on. Hands of angels, hidden from mortal eyes, shifted the scenery of the heavens: the glories of night dissolved into the glories of the dawn. The blue sky now turned more softly gray;

the great watch-stars shut up their holy eyes; the east began to kindle. Faint streaks of purple soon blushed along the sky; the whole celestial concave was filled with the inflowing tides of the morning light, which came pouring down from above in one great ocean of radiance; till at length, as we reached the blue hills, a flash of purple fire blazed out from above the horizon, and turned the dewy tear-drops of flower and leaf into rubies and diamonds. In a few seconds, the everlasting gates of the morning were thrown wide open, and the lord of day, arrayed in glories too severe for the gaze of man, began his course.

"I do not wonder at the superstition of the ancient Magians, who, in the morning of the world, went up to the hill-tops of Central Asia, and, ignorant of the true God, adored the most glorious work of his hand. But I am filled with amazement when I am told that, in this enlightened age, and in the heart of the Christian world, there are persons who can witness this daily manifestation of the power and wisdom of the Creator, and yet say in their hearts, '*There is no God.*'"

For the Journal.

NO. I.—MATHEMATICAL GEOGRAPHY AND THE BEST METHOD OF TEACHING IT.

We have only to examine the text-books on *Modern School Geography* to be convinced that the subject under investigation has been sadly neglected. Reasons may be alleged for its non-introduction into our schools, partly because there were so many branches required to be taught which seemed to supersede it in usefulness, and partly because it was deemed a dry, uninteresting and difficult study, and one that could not be well taught without the aid of a globe. Admitting it to be a component part of astronomy, it is also a part of geography, and, divested of some of its technicalities, it may be made one of the most pleasing and instructive branches taught in schools. The pupil will be prepared to enter upon the study, and appreciate the beauties of *astronomy*, and, at the same time, will be furnished with a new incentive in the pursuit of *ordinary* and *physical* geography.

In calling the attention of teachers to this subject, we purpose to show that there are many points of it easy to be acquired, and full of thrilling interest, and that it may be taught to pupils at a very early

age. The pupil should first understand the nature of a map, and possess some general knowledge of the geographical features of his own and transatlantic countries.

I would make *five divisions* of the *subject*. First, I would teach them how to find north and south, by the *pole star* and the *sun at noon*. For this purpose, I would invite the class to meet me on a clear evening at the school-house or some elevated position where the *pole* and circumpolar stars could be distinctly seen. I would then direct their attention to a group of stars called the *dipper*, or *ladle*, and sometimes *Charles Wain*, and the *plough*, and not unfrequently, *the great Bear*, the name of the whole constellation. I would show them the two stars in the bowl of the *dipper*, called the pointers, and that, by means of these, the north star may always be found. It will be easily recognized, as there is no star of equal magnitude in the immediate vicinity, and it is always seen by the naked eye in the same direction, because the circle it describes about the pole is so small that its motion is not sensible to the eye without the aid of some instrument. This point gained, the next thing in course is to show them when the sun is on the meridian. If your school-house fronts the south, place a compass near the door, (if the sun shines into the entry,) and draw a line with chalk in the direction of north—place upon the end of this line, nearest the door, in an erect position, an object as large as a walking-stick, and when the shadow of the object is on the chalked-line, the sun is on the meridian, and it is 12 o'clock. And here may be shown the coincidence of noon with the sun reaching the highest point for the day.

The *second* division of the subject relates to the *roundness* of the *earth*. If the pupils are quite small, that it is round, may rest upon the teachers word, and the proofs be deferred for a future occasion: but when the time arrives for the demonstration of the subject, it must be entered upon as a real exercise in reasoning, and not simply for repeating dogmatically, or parrot-like, the various proofs without an understanding of the reason or applicability of them. The first proof which I should present for their consideration, is that the earth has been sailed around, and to illustrate this, refer to Ferdinand Magellan, through whose enterprise the first voyage around the world was accomplished. Tell them why he, a Portuguese, should be in the employ of Spain,* what enterprise was entrusted to him, † what strait he discovered.‡ Tell them that he was slain in a skirmish

* Because his services were not valued by his own country.

† To find a westward passage to the Maluccas. ‡ Straits of Magellan.

with the natives at one of the Philippine Islands, called Matan, but the voyage was accomplished after his death. Tell them that he sailed from Seville, in Spain. The interest of the class being aroused, and their sympathy excited in behalf of the great navigator, let them open the maps of Europe, find Spain, and now for Seville, situated on the bank of the Guadalquiver, about sixty miles N. N. E. of Cadiz. Let them follow the direction of the river to its mouth, then turn to the map of the world, follow the navigator across the Atlantic, along the coast of *America* to its southern extremity, around the promontory, up the western shore, and then, by a westerly course, to the Philippine Islands. Having arrived at this group of Islands pause, and contemplate the scene which occurred, which resulted in the death of the *commander*. The last rites of respect having been shown in behalf of the deceased navigator, the class may again proceed to follow the course of the ships to the mouth of, and thence up the Guadalquiver, home, making a complete voyage round the world, pursuing a westerly course, allowance being made for promontories, &c. I would assign them a similar exercise for the next recitation, taking for example, the name of *Capt. Cook*, a description of his first voyage round the globe—his place of departure, direction sailed, &c.; pursue this method until the class are familiar with circumnavigations. Show them by means of a hemisphere globe, that they may continue to sail westerly and arrive at the place of departure. This one thing fixed, you have done more to wake up mind than a whole year's ordinary study of geography. The subject will be further pursued in our next article.

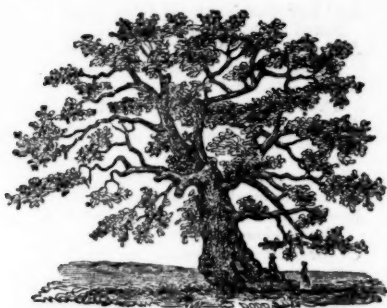
A. GARDNER,

Manchester Centre, Conn.

THE DEAD CHILD.

Few things appear so beautiful as a young child in its shroud. The little innocent face looks sublimely simple and confiding among the terrors of death. Crimeless and fearless, that little mortal has passed alone under the shadow. There is death in the sublimest and purest image—no hatred, no hypocrisy, no suspicion. No care for the morrow ever darkened that little face; death has come lovingly upon it; there is nothing cruel or harsh in its victory. The yearnings of love, indeed, cannot be stifled; for the prattle and smile, all the little world of thoughts that were so delightful, are gone forever. Awe, too, will overcast us in its presence, for the lonely voyager, for the child has gone, simple and trusting, into the presence of its all-wise Father; and of such, we know is the kingdom of heaven.

Selected.



THE CHARTER OAK.

[We give above, a faithful representation of the famous old Charter Oak as it appeared when standing. It is well known to our readers that it was prostrated by the wind on the night of August 21, 1856. The following beautiful and appropriate lines from the gifted pen of Mrs. Sigourney, commemorate its fall. They are worthy of perusal and preservation.—*RES. ED.*]

FALL OF THE CHARTER OAK.

From the Hartford Courant.

Woe,—for the mighty Tree !—
The monarch of the plain,—
The storm hath reft its noble heart,
It ne'er shall tower again ;—
In ruins far and wide,
Its giant limbs are laid,—
Like some strong dynasty of earth
Whose nod the nations sway'd.

Woe,—for the ancient Oak !—
Our pilgrim-fathers' pride,—
That shook the centuries from its crown,
And flourished when they died ;—
The grass flower at its feet,
Shall quickening Spring restore,—
But healthful dews, or nesting bird
Revisit it no more.

The roaming Indian prized
Its canopy of shade,—
And bless'd it while his council-fire
In eddying volumes play'd ;—
He, for its wisdom sought,
As to a Delphic shrine,—
He ask'd it when to plant his corn,
And waited for the sign.

Yon white hair'd man sits down
Where its torn branches lie,
And tells the listening boy the tale
Of threatened Liberty,—
How tyrant pomp and power
Once in the olden time,
Came Brennus-like, with iron tramp
To crush this infant clime.

The Charter Oak.

And how that brave old Oak
 Stood forth, a friend indeed,
 And spread its Ægis o'er our sires
 In their extremest need,
 And in its sacred breast,
 Their germ of Freedom bore,
 And hid their life-blood in its veins
 Until the blast was o'er.

Throngs gathering round the spot,
 Their mournful memories weave,
 Even children in strange silence stand,
 Unconscious why they grieve.
 Or for their casket seek
 Some relic spray to glean,—
 Acorn, or precious leaf to press
 Their Bible-leaves between.

Was there no other prey,
 Oh Storm!—that thunder'd by?—
 Wreaking thy vengeance, 'neath the shroud
 Of a wild, midnight sky?—
 Was there no kingly Elm,
 Majestic, broad and free,
 That thou must thus in madness smite
 Our tutelary tree?

Our beacon of the past,—
 Our chronicle of time,—
 Our Mecca,—to whose greenwood glade
 Come feet from every clime?—
 Hark!—to the echoing dirge,
 In measures deep and slow,—
 While on the breeze our banner floats,
 Draped in the weeds of woe.

The fair ones of our Vale,
 O'er its fallen Guardian sigh,—
 And Elders, with prophetic thought,
 Dark auguries descry;—
 Patriots and Sages deign
 O'er the loved wreck to bend,—
 And in the funeral of the Oak
 Lament their Country's Friend.

L. H. S.

HARTFORD, CONN., Thursday, August 22, 1856.

VERY TRUE.

If every one's internal care,
 Were written on his brow,
 How many would our pity share
 Who raise our envy now!
 The fatal secret when revealed,
 Of every aching breast,
 Would fully prove, that while concealed,
 Their lot appears the best.

STORIES FOR THE YOUTH.

[We intend to have in each number of the *Journal* a story for the young. If teachers will read it (or cause it to be read) to their pupils, and accompany its reading with a few remarks which shall tend to press its moral upon their hearts, much good may be anticipated. In this number we give three or four short ones,—each of which contains a good lesson.—*Res. Ed.*]

GOOD FOR EVIL.

An old man, of the name of Guyot, lived and died in the town of Marseilles, in France. He amassed a large fortune by the most laborious industry, and the severest habits of abstinence and privation. His neighbors considered him a miser, and thought that he was hoarding up money from mean and avaricious motives. The populace pursued him, wherever he appeared, with hootings and execrations; and the boys sometimes threw stones at him. In his will were found the following words: "Having observed, from my infancy, that the poor of Marseilles are ill-supplied with water, which can only be purchased at a great price, I have cheerfully labored the whole of my life to procure for them this great blessing; and I direct that the whole of my property shall be laid out in building an aqueduct for their use."

"THAT IS A BOY I CAN TRUST."

"I once visited," says a gentleman, "a large public school. At recess, a little fellow came up, and spoke to the master: and as he turned to go down the platform, the master said, 'That is a boy I can trust. He never failed me.' I followed him with my eye, and looked at him when he took his seat after recess. He had a fine, open, manly face. I thought a good deal about the master's remark. What a character had that little boy earned! He had already got what would be worth to him more than a fortune. It would be a passport to the best office in the city, and, what is better, to the confidence of the whole community. I wonder if the boys know how soon they are rated by elder people. Every boy in the neighborhood is known, opinions are formed of him, and he has a character either favorable or unfavorable. A boy of whom the master can say, 'I can trust him; he never failed me;' will never want employment. The fidelity, promptness, and industry, which he has shown at school, are prized everywhere. 'He who is faithful in little, will be faithful in much.'"

ANECDOTE TOLD BY A NEW ENGLAND CLERGYMAN.

Soon after I was settled in the ministry, I was appointed a member of the school committee of the place. In my frequent visits to one of the schools, I took notice of a boy whose clothing was very coarse, and showed many patches, but still was clean and neat throughout. His habits were remarkably quiet and orderly, and his manners very correct. His disposition was evidently generous and kind, and his temper mild and cheerful, as he mingled with his schoolmates at play, or joined their company on the road. When I last saw him in New England, he was on his way to school. His appearance still bespoke the condition of his poor and widowed mother; and his hat was but a poor protection against either sun or rain. But, as I passed him, he lifted it with an easy but respectful action, a pleasant smile, and a cheerful "good morning," which unconsciously to himself, made the noble boy a perfect model of genuine good manners. His bow, his smile, and his words, all came straight from his true, kind heart.

When I last saw him, thirty years had passed, and I was on a visit to the West. The boy had become a distinguished lawyer and statesman. But his bow, and his smile, and his kind greeting, were just the same as those of the barefoot boy with the poor hat.

HOW TO BE LOVED.

One evening, a gentleman related, in the presence of his little girl, an anecdote of a still younger daughter of Dr. Doddridge, which pleased her exceedingly. When the doctor asked his daughter, then about six years old, what made everybody love her, she replied, "I don't know indeed, papa, unless it is because I love everybody." This reply struck Susan forcibly. "If that is all that is necessary to be loved," thought she, "I will soon make everybody love me." Her father then mentioned a remark of the Rev. John Newton, that he considered the world to be divided into two great masses, one of happiness, and the other of misery; and it was his daily business to take as much as possible from the heap of misery, and add all he could to that of happiness. "Now," said Susan, "I will begin to-morrow to make everybody happy. Instead of thinking all the time of myself, I will ask every minute what I can do for somebody else. Papa has often told me that this is the best way to be happy myself, and I am determined to try."—*Mass. Teacher.*

PHONOGRAPHY.

MESSRS. EDITORS: I see you introduce an occasional article on the subject of Phonography. The Journal is a proper work to discuss it. Its claims for general adoption are pressed very severely by its friends. Reasons for its use are readily found and strongly presented. Those on the opposite side are also sought and produced. Two have occurred to me, which, if not arguments against it, yet meet the arguments for it.

The great claim for it is, that whoever can write can spell correctly whatever he hears, because he is to spell as he hears. And for this reason, we shall have uniformity of orthography. The old question, "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" occurs to me at once. One phonographer would write *nither*, another *nither*; one *ither*, another *ither*. A reporter in New England would say *such*, one in Missouri would write *sich*. Surely it would be difficult to trace analogies with such use of the language, or to secure uniformity. This objection applies not only to words differently pronounced in the same community and by "the best authorities," but to all words which are differently pronounced in all parts of the world.

The other difficulty arises from the occurrence of so many uncertain vowel sounds. Who can tell whether a speaker says *number*, *numbar*, *numbor* or *numbur*, written, *written* or *written*? Then we should have all those forms of these and many other words. It will not answer the objection to direct me to a dictionary. For above all books and rules, is this first principle of the system, "Spell as it is spoken." The question would continually be, "How was it spoken?" and different ears would demand very different replies.

The slaughter which the system would make of the king's English, is a sufficient reason to keep educated men from giving much encouragement to the system. To them and the conservatism (fogyism if you please) of the age, I leave the subject, not without interest as to what will come of the movement.

W.

THE OBJECT OF EDUCATION. The true object of education is to give children resources that will endure as long as life endures; habits that time will ameliorate, not destroy; occupation that will render sickness tolerable, solitude pleasant, age venerable; life more dignified and useful, and death less terrible.—*Sydney Smith*.

RULES FOR TEACHERS.

1. From your earliest connection with your pupils, inculcate the necessity of *prompt* and *exact* obedience.

2. Unite firmness with gentleness,—and let your pupils understand that you *mean* exactly what you *say*.

3. Never promise anything, unless you are quite sure you can give all you promise.

4. Always punish a pupil for willful disobedience, but never punish with undue severity, nor in anger;—and in no case inflict a blow on the head.

5. Never let your pupils see that they can vex you, or make you lose your self-command.

6. If pupils are under the influence of an angry or petulant spirit, wait till they are calm, and then reason with them on the impropriety of their conduct.

7. Never yield anything to a pupil because he looks angry, or attempts to move you by threats and tears. Deal mercifully but justly, too.

8. A little present punishment, when the occasion arises, is more effectual than the threatening of greater punishment, should the fault be repeated.

9. Never allow your pupils to do at one time, what you have forbidden, under like circumstances, at another.

10. Teach the young to feel that the only sure and easy way to *appear* good is to *be* good.

11. Never allow tale-bearing.

12. If a pupil abuses your confidence, make him feel, for a time, the want of it.

13. Never allude to former errors when real sorrow has been evinced for having committed them. Treat the truly repentant with special kindness.

14. Encourage in every suitable way, a spirit of diligence, obedience, perseverance, kindness, forbearance, honesty, truthfulness, purity and courteousness.

15. Never speak in a scolding and fretful manner, but use tones of gentleness.

16. Strive to convince your pupils that you are their true friend and will do them good.—*Northend's Teacher and Parent.*

SCHOOLS AS THEY WERE FIFTY YEARS AGO.

[The following graphic and amusing account of Peter Parley's first school, we take from his "Recollections of a Life Time," a highly interesting work, recently published. While a comparison of many schools of modern date will indicate great progress, we cannot help thinking that, in some instances, the people are, intellectually, guilty suicides, and still retain the "four corners" for the little brown school house, and though it is no easy matter to find an "Aunt Delight," in schools of modern time, still there may be instances in which a like personage, or some "Uncle Ichabod" or "Aunt Betty" is employed, in order to save the dimes, and prolong the school session. A better investment for the public money would be its deposit at the bottom of the Atlantic; for there, to say the least, it would do no harm, and be perfectly safe.—*Res. Ed.*]

THE devotion of the New England people to education has been celebrated from time immemorial. In this trait of character, Connecticut was not behind the foremost of her sister puritans. Now, among the traditions of the days to which my narrative refers, there was one which set forth that the law of the land assigned to persons committing suicide, a burial place where four roads met. I do not recollect that this popular notion was ever tested in Ridgefield, for nobody in those innocent days, so far as I know, became weary of existence. Be this as it may, it is certain that the village school-house was often planted in the very spot supposed to be the privileged graveyard of suicides. The reason is plain enough: the roads were always of ample width at the crossings, and the narrowest of these spaces was sufficient for the little brown seminaries of learning. At the same time—and this was doubtless the material point—the land belonged to the town, and so the site would cost nothing. Such were the ideas of village education in enlightened New England, half a century ago. Let those who deny the progress of society, compare this with the state of things at the present day.

About three-fourths of a mile from my father's house, on the winding road to Lower Salem, which I have already mentioned, and which bore the name of West Lane, was the school-house where I took my first lessons, and received the foundations of my very slender education. I have since been sometimes asked where I graduated: my reply has always been, "At West Lane." Generally speaking, this has ended the inquiry, whether because my interlocutors have confounded this venerable institution with "Lane Seminary," or have not thought it worth while to risk an exposure of their ignorance as to the college in which I was educated, I am unable to say.

The site of the school-house was a triangular piece of land, measuring perhaps a rood in extent, and lying, according to the custom of those days, at the meeting of four roads. The ground hereabouts — as everywhere else in Ridgefield — was exceedingly stony; and in making the pathway, the stones had been thrown out, right and left, and there remained in heaps on either side, from generation to generation. All around was bleak and desolate. Loose, squat stone-walls, with innumerable breaches, inclosed the adjacent fields. A few tufts of elder, with here and there a patch of briars and pokeweed, flourished in the gravelly soil. Not a tree, however, remained, save an aged chestnut, at the western angle of the space. This, certainly, had not been spared for shade or ornament, but probably because it would have cost too much labor to cut it down, for it was of ample girth. At all events, it was the oasis in our desert during summer; and in autumn, as the burs disclosed its fruit, it resembled a besieged city. The boys, like so many catapults, hurled at it stones and sticks until every nut had capitulated. * * * *

The school-house itself consisted of rough, unpainted clapboards, upon a wooden frame. It was plastered within, and contained two apartments — a little entry, taken out of a corner for a wardrobe, and the school-room proper. The chimney was of stone, and pointed with mortar, which, by the way, had been dug into a honeycomb by uneasy and enterprising penknives. The fireplace was six feet wide, and four feet deep. The flue was so ample and so perpendicular, that the rain, sleet and snow fell direct to the hearth. In winter, the battle for life with green fizzling fuel, which was brought in sled lengths, and cut up by the scholars, was a stern one. Not unfrequently, the wood, gushing with sap as it was, chanced to be out; and as there was no living without fire, the thermometer being ten or twenty degrees below zero, the school was dismissed, whereat all the scholars rejoiced aloud, not having the fear of the schoolmaster before their eyes.

It was the custom at this place, to have a woman's school in the summer months, and this was attended only by young children. It was, in fact, what we now call a primary or infant school. In winter, a man was employed as teacher, and then the girls and boys of the neighborhood, up to the age of eighteen, or even twenty, were among the pupils. It was not uncommon, at this season, to have forty scholars crowded into this little building.

I was about six years old when I first went to school. My teacher was Aunt Delight, that is, Delight Benedict, a maiden lady of fifty,



AUNT DELIGHT.

short and bent, of sallow complexion and solemn aspect. I remember the first day with perfect distinctness. I went alone — for I was familiar with the road, it being that which passed by our old house. I carried a little basket, with bread and butter within, for my dinner; the same being covered over with a white cloth. When I had proceeded about half way, I lifted the cover, and debated whether I would not eat my dinner then. I believe it was a sense of duty only that prevented my doing so, for in those happy days I always had a keen appetite. Bread and butter were then infinitely superior to *pâté de foie gras* now; but still, thanks to my training, I had also a conscience. As my mother had given me the food for dinner, I did not think it right to convert it into lunch, even though I was strongly tempted.

I think we had seventeen scholars — boys and girls — mostly of my own age. Among them were some of my after companions. I have since met several of them — one at Savannah, and two at Mobile, respectably established, and with families around them. Some remain, and are now among the gray old men of the town. The names of others I have seen inscribed on the tombstones of their native village: and the rest — where are they?

The school being organized, we were all seated upon benches, made of what were called *slabs* — that is, boards having the exterior or rounded part of the log on one side: as they were useless for other purposes, these were converted into school benches, the rounded part down. They had each four supports, consisting of straddling wooden legs, set into auger-holes. Our own legs swayed in the air, for they were too short to touch the floor. Oh, what an awe fell over me, when we were all seated, and silence reigned around!

The children were called up, one by one, to Aunt Delight, who sat on a low chair, and required each, as a preliminary, to make his manners, consisting of a small sudden nod or jerk of the head. She then placed the spelling-book — which was Dilworth's — before the pupil, and with a buck-handled penknife, pointed, one by one, to the letters of the alphabet, saying "What's that?" If the child knew his letters, the "what's that?" very soon ran on thus:

"What's that?"

"A."

"'Stha-a-t?"

"B."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"C."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"D."

"Sna-a-a-t?"

"E." &c.

I looked upon these operations with intense curiosity and no small respect, until my own turn came. I went up to the school-mistress with some emotion, and when she said, rather spitefully as I thought, "Make your obeisance!" my little intellects all fled away, and I did nothing. Having waited a second, gazing at me with indignation, she laid her hand on the top of my head, and gave it a jerk which made my teeth clash. I believe I bit my tongue a little; at all events, my sense of dignity was offended, and when she pointed to A, and asked what it was, it swam before me, dim and hazy, and as big as a full moon. She repeated the question, but I was doggedly silent. Again, a third time, she said, "What's that?" I replied: "Why don't you tell me what it is? I didn't come here to learn you your letters!" I have not the slightest remembrance of this, for my brains were all a-wool-gathering; but as Aunt Delight affirmed it to be a fact, and it passed into a tradition, I put it in. I may have told this story some years ago, in one of my books, imputing it to a fictitious hero, yet this is its true origin, according to my recollection.

What immediately followed I do not clearly remember, but one result is distinctly traced in my memory. In the evening of this eventful day, the school-mistress paid my parents a visit, and recounted to their astonished ears, this, my awful contempt of authority. My father, after hearing the story, got up and went away; but my mother, who was a careful disciplinarian, told me not to do so again! I always had a suspicion that both of them smiled on one side of their faces, even while they seemed to sympathize with the old petticoat and penknife pedagogue, on the other; still, I do not affirm it, for I am bound to say of both my parents, that I never knew them, even in trifles, say one thing while they meant another.

I believe I achieved the alphabet that summer, but my after progress, for a long time, I do not remember. Two years later, I went to the winter school at the same place, kept by Lewis Olmstead — a man who had a call for plowing, mowing, carting manure, &c., in the summer, and for teaching school in the winter; with a talent for music at all seasons, wherefore he became chorister upon occasion, when, peradventure, Deacon Hawley could not officiate. He was a celebrity in ciphering, and 'Squire Seymour declared that he was the greatest "arithmeticker" in Fairfield county. All I remember

of his person is his hand, which seemed to me as big as Goliath's, judging by the claps of thunder it made in my ears on one or two occasions.

The next step of my progress which is marked in my memory, is the spelling of words of two syllables. I did not go very regularly to school, but by the time I was ten years old I had learned to write, and had made a little progress in arithmetic. There was not a grammar, a geography, or a history of any kind in the school. Reading, writing and arithmetic, were the *only* things taught, and these very indifferently—not wholly from the stupidity of the teacher, but because he had forty scholars, and the standards of the age required no more than he performed. I did as well as the other scholars—certainly no better. I had excellent health and joyous spirits: in leaping, running, and wrestling, I had but one superior of my age, and that was Stephen Olmstead, a snug-built fellow, smaller than myself, and who, despite our rivalry, was my chosen friend and companion. I seemed to live for play: alas! how the world has changed since I have discovered that we live to agonize over study, work, care, ambition, disappointment, and then ——?

As I shall not have occasion again, formally, to introduce this seminary into my narrative, I may as well close my account of it now. After I had left my native town for some twenty years, I returned and paid it a visit. Among the monuments that stood high in my memory, was the West Lane school-house. Unconsciously carrying with me the measures of childhood, I had supposed it to be at least thirty feet square: how had it dwindled when I came to estimate it by the new standards I had formed! It was in all things the same, and yet wholly changed to me. What I had deemed a respectable edifice, as it now stood before me was only a weather-beaten little shed, which, upon being measured, I found to be less than twenty feet square. It happened to be a warm summer day, and I ventured to enter the place. I found a girl, some eighteen years old, keeping a ma'am school for about twenty scholars, some of whom were studying Parley's Geography. The mistress was the daughter of one of my schoolmates, and some of the boys and girls were grandchildren of the little brood which gathered under the wing of Aunt Delight, when I was an a-b-c-darian. None of them, not even the school-mistress, had ever heard of me. The name of my father, as having ministered unto the people of Ridgefield in some bygone age, was faintly traced in their recollection. As to Peter Parley, whose geography they were learning—they supposed him some decrepit

old gentleman, hobbling about on a crutch, a long way off; for whom, nevertheless, they had a certain affection, inasmuch as he had made geography into a story-book. The frontispiece-picture of the old fellow, with his gouty foot in a chair, threatening the boys that if they touched his tender toe, he would tell them no more stories—secured their respect, and placed him among the saints in the calendar of their young hearts.

TRUST IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

Two men used to work in the fields together. One of them was cheerful and happy, but the other was always full of fears, and miserable. The fearful one would say to his companions, "What would become of my children if I were to die?" And the other would try and persuade him to be thankful that he was yet able to work, and to earn bread for them; but he could not comfort him.

Now, in the field in which they were at work, they spied two nests in one bush, and they used to watch the old birds going in and out all the day long, with food for their little ones. And they often spoke to each other about the love of these birds for their young. But one day, just as one of the old birds was flying towards his nest, a hawk pounced down upon him, and carried him away. And now the poor man who had been miserable before, became ten times more miserable. He could hardly sleep all night for thinking first of the poor little birds that had no parents to feed them, and then of his own children, who would have no one to work for them if he should die.

In the morning he went softly to the bush, and looking in at the nests, for thinking he should see the young birds in one of the nests dying. But he was astonished to see they were alive in both nests, and chirping as merrily as if no hawk had ever come near them. He could not tell how it could be; so he sat down close by to watch them. Presently he saw the old birds, belonging to one of the nests, fly in, and they fed the little ones in one of them, and then they went away, and came back with food to the little ones in the other nest; and so they went on all the day long. And he called his companion, and almost wept for joy as he showed him this thing.

So they said to each other, that they would imitate the birds, and work as well as they could, each for his own family, and so long as

he was able ; and if either of them should die, or be unable to work, then the other would go on and labor for both families.

What a blessed thing it would have been for that poor, fearful man, if he had known the kind words the Saviour once spoke, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."—*Selected.*

A WOMAN'S ANSWER.

A writer, illustrating the fact that some errors are lifted into importance by efforts to refute them, when they need to be treated with wholesome doses of contempt and ridicule, observes that all the blows inflicted by the Herculean club of certain logicians, are not half so effectual as a box on the ear of a celebrated atheist, by the hand of beauty. After having in vain preached to a circle of ladies, he attempted to revenge himself by saying: "Pardon my error, ladies; I did not imagine that in a house where wit vies with grace, I alone should have the honor of not believing in a God." "You are not alone, sir," answered the lady of the house; "my horses, my dogs, my cat, share the honor with you, only those brutes have the good sense not to boast of it."

This reminds us of what occurred a few years ago on one of our Western rivers. A thing in the shape of a man was glorying in his atheism, avowing that the present life was all of a man; that he had no soul and no hereafter. "And so you have no soul?" asked a gentleman of the group, evidently desiring to reason with him on the subject. "No," replied the atheist, "not a whit more than a pig." The gentleman was about to enter on an argument with him, when an elderly Scotch lady spoke up smartly: "Sir, I hope you will not spend your breath in reasoning with the creature; by his ain confession he has nae mair soul than a pig; and ye wad no argue wi' a pig."

IS FRIDAY AN UNLUCKY DAY?

From time immemorial, Friday has been frowned upon as a day of ill omen; and though the prejudice is less prevalent now than has

been of yore, when superstition had general sway, yet there are many even in this matter-of-fact age of ours, who would hesitate on a day so suspicious, to begin an undertaking of momentous import. And how many brave mariners, whose hearts unquailing could meet the wildest fury of their ocean home, would blanch to even bend their sails on Friday? But, to show with how much reason this feeling is indulged, let us examine the following important facts in connection with our new settlement and greatness as a nation, and we will see how little cause we Americans have to dread the fatal day: On Friday, August 21, 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed on his great voyage of discovery. On Friday, October 12, 1492, he first discovered land. On Friday, January 4, 1493, he sailed on his return to Spain, which, if he had not reached in safety, the happy result would never have been known, which led to the settlement of this vast continent. On Friday, March 15, 1493, he arrived at Palos in safety. On Friday, November 22, 1493, he arrived at Hispaniola, on his second voyage to America. On Friday, June 13, 1494, he, though unknown to himself, discovered the continent of America. On Friday, March 5, 1496, Henry VII. of England, gave to John Cabot his commission, which led to the discovery of North America. This is the first American State paper in England. On Friday, September 7, 1565, Melendez founded St. Augustine, the oldest town in the United States, by more than forty years. On Friday, November 10, 1620, the Mayflower, with the Pilgrims, made the harbor of Province Town, and on that day they signed that august compact, the forerunner of our present glorious constitution. On Friday, December 22, 1620, the Pilgrims made their final landing at Plymouth Rock. On Friday, February 22, 1732, George Washington, the father of American freedom, was born. On Friday, June 16, Bunker Hill was seized and fortified. On Friday, October 7, 1777, the surrender of Saratoga was made, which had such power and influence in inducing France to declare for our cause. On Friday, October 19, 1781, the surrender at Yorktown, the crowning glory of the American arms, occurred. On Friday, July 7, 1776, the motion in Congress was made by John Adams, seconded by Richard Henry Lee, that the United Colonies were, and of right ought to be, free and independent. Thus, by numerous examples, we see, that, however it may be with foreign nations, Americans need never dread to begin on Friday any undertaking, however momentous it may be.

Norfolk, (United States) Beacon.

A SOFT PILLOW.

Whitefield and a pious companion were much annoyed one night at a public house, by a set of gamblers in the room adjoining where they slept. Their noisy clamor and horrid blasphemy so excited Whitefield's abhorrence and pious sympathy that he could not rest.

"I will go in to them, and reprove their wickedness," he said. His companion remonstrated in vain. He went. His words of reproof fell apparently powerless upon them. Returning, he laid down to sleep. His companion asked him rather abruptly:

"What did you gain by it?"

"A soft pillow," he said, patiently, and soon fell asleep.

Yes, a "soft pillow" is the reward of fidelity, the companion of a clear conscience. It is sufficient remuneration for doing right, in the absence of all other reward. And none know more truly the value of a soft pillow, than those parents, whose anxiety for wayward children, is enhanced by a consciousness of neglect. Those who faithfully rebuke, and properly restrain them by their Christian deportment and religious counsels, can sleep quietly in their day of trial.

Parents ! do your duty now, in the fear of God, and when old age comes on, you may lie down upon a soft pillow, assured of His favor who has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old, he will not depart from it."—*Christian Freeman.*

POETRY.

"I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell ;
To which, in silence hush'd, his very soul
Listened intensely ; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy ; for murmurings from within
Were heard, sonorous cadences ;! whereby,
To his belief, the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith ; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tidings of invisible things ;
Of ebb and flow and ever-during power ;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation."—*Wordsworth.*

[OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT.]

REMARKS ON THE SCHOOL LAW.

TO VISITORS AND OTHER SCHOOL OFFICERS:

As frequent applications are made at this department for copies of the new School Law, I take this opportunity to say that there are no copies in my hands for distribution. The Clerk of the House was charged with the duty of printing and distributing that document to the clerk of each school-district. This duty, I have reason to believe has been faithfully performed, and now if any inconvenience is experienced for want of more copies, the fault lies not at the door of this department. The legislature should have ordered the printing of an edition sufficiently large to supply all reasonable demands.

In some quarters, the design and scope of this new act concerning education is somewhat misapprehended. It has been stated that the main design was to take away the powers from school districts and place them in the hands of the Visitors. How such a statement could be seriously made by any person who had taken the pains to compare the new law with the old, I am at a loss to imagine. As a matter of fact, not a single power formerly possessed by districts, has been removed. On the contrary, the powers and duties of districts have been somewhat increased. By the new act, districts are invested with the power to establish schools of different grades, and to tax property for the support of schools. Additional privileges are also granted them for the establishment of district libraries.

Again, it is supposed by some that the new act is designed to make a very radical change in the whole economy of our school system. This is a great mistake. No such change was or is deemed desirable. Had such a step been considered desirable, it would not have been thought expedient.

Changes in laws which intimately affect the interests and habits of the great mass of the community, should always be exceedingly gradual, and such alterations only should be attempted as public opinion is prepared to receive.

Let it be distinctly understood that the principal object of the new school act was to *restore to towns the management of school affairs*. This measure was deemed indispensable to the healthy and vigorous growth of our school system. The arguments for this measure have been repeated in many forms for the last twenty years, but never satisfactorily refuted. A large majority of the people demanded the

measure or at least were fully prepared to receive it, as the adoption of it clearly shows. The change from the society to the town system will of course, at first, in some localities, cause some friction. This was to be anticipated.

No reasonable person will, on that account, be led to doubt its great general utility. The beneficial effects of it are already beginning to appear. Let the interests of our schools be discussed among the *people at town meeting*, and progress will inevitably be the result. Who says there is not time for it at town meeting? What reason is there for allowing any other business to take the precedence of education? Sometimes politicians may come in and dispose of school offices to suit their purposes, still in most cases, the vigilance of party criticism will insure the selection of the most competent persons. It is only necessary for the town system to have a fair trial to vindicate itself. It will be approved by an overwhelming majority. The society system have some advantages, but they are a thousand times outweighed by its disadvantages.

Another object of the new law was to provide for the establishment of school libraries. This feature will find no opponents, except among the opponents of popular education. Every one will approve it who believes in the utility of diffusing intelligence and virtue among the people. If a single district allows a year to pass without availing itself of the bounty of the State to supply itself with a library of good books, proof will not be wanted that such a district is not awake to its true interests.

It will be observed that provision is also made for more full and complete reports and returns. I shall do all in my power, by furnishing forms and explanations to facilitate the execution of this part of the law so as to make it as little troublesome as possible to school officers. Heretofore Connecticut has not received proper credit for what she has done, from the fact that there was no system whereby her standing could be demonstrated by accurate and full statistics. In the next number of the *Journal*, I shall speak more particularly of the proper construction of certain points in the law.

JOHN D. PHILBRICK,*

Superintendent of Common Schools.

Resident Editor's Department.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

IN accepting the office of Resident Editor, for the ensuing year, the undersigned is not unmindful that he is assuming a great responsibility. The work itself, under any circumstances, would demand much time and thought and labor; but to follow one who has devoted so much attention and energy to the editorial department of the Journal,—one who has done so much to awaken general interest, promote right feeling, and secure correct and harmonious action on the part of teachers and friends of education, as my predecessor has done,—makes it a work of still greater magnitude, and one upon which I enter with extreme diffidence. I am, however, encouraged to undertake the work, not from a sense of peculiar fitness for its performance, but from the assurance of a generous and hearty coöperation on the part of the friends of education, and from a consciousness that I shall have the good wishes and kindly sympathies of a band of noble-hearted and devoted teachers. In this will consist my chief strength and support, and if I may continue to receive that cordial and fraternal treatment which has been extended to me since my residence within the State, my own weakness will be strengthened thereby. My highest aim and strongest desire will be to labor *with* and *for* the teachers;—to do something, if possible, to make their duties more pleasant and successful; something, perchance, to form in the public mind a just appreciation of the teacher's position,—his rights, his difficulties, his claims. If, in any way, I may be the humble instrument of advancing the great interests of popular education, and of causing the teacher's profession to assume its true rank in the minds of the people; if, by my own efforts and those of others, the Journal can be made a pleasant and profitable companion for the teacher's hours of retirement by becoming the medium of practical suggestions and useful lessons, I shall feel amply compensated for any efforts that may be required at my hands.

Of my predecessor, the Hon. John D. Philbrick, it is unnecessary for me to speak. His works speak for him. His earnest, devoted and judicious labors have secured the good-will of all, and gained for him a choice spot in the hearts of the teachers of Connecticut. As the friend of education, and the teacher's fellow-laborer, he is known, honored, and beloved throughout the State. It is pleasant to feel that we may still have his aid and counsels.

Of the condition and prospects of the Journal, my predecessor has spoken. But in saying that the Journal is now in a living, or self-sustaining condition, implies more than many imagine. It indicates that the breath of life has been infused into it by the self-sacrificing efforts of a few devoted friends. It did not commence its existence in full vigor. It was carefully watched and supported during a feeble infancy; it was guarded and sustained during the first tottering steps of childhood,—and now that it begins to “go alone,”—now, even, it is in danger of falling, and as much as ever needs the cheering support of its friends. May they never leave nor forsake it.

It is well, occasionally, for the friends of education to take a retrospective view of the field of their labors, and as they see what has been accomplished, be stimulated to greater efforts. It may be new, as well as interesting, to many of our readers, to know something of the origin of teachers' journals on a plan similar to that of the Connecticut Journal,—for it must not be supposed that teachers have enjoyed the benefits of associations and educational periodicals from time immemorial. They are both of modern origin. The “Essex County Teachers' Association,” in Massachusetts, was organized nearly thirty years ago, and that and the “American Institute of Instruction” were, for many years, the only teachers' associations in the United States. In October, 1844, the first named association appointed a committee to prepare and issue circulars for calling a meeting of teachers for the purpose of organizing a State Teachers' Association. The writer of this was chairman of that committee, and his associates were *Roger S. Howard, Esq.*, now principal of a high school for young ladies, in Bangor, Maine; *D. P. Galloup, Esq.*, teacher, Lowell, Mass., and *Rev. E. S. Stearns*, principal of a female seminary in Albany. At that time the members of the committee all resided in the same county; now they live in four different States. The convention met at Worcester, Mass., in November, 1844, and organized the “Massachusetts Teachers' Association,” which has been in useful existence to the present time. At that time it was the only State Association,—now there are several

others. For many years previously, *Horace Mann* had labored in Massachusetts, and *Henry Barnard* in Connecticut, in attempting to awaken more interest in behalf of common schools, and for a long series of years did Mr. Barnard labor with a noble zeal and perseverance in behalf of popular education,—and no man has done more to arouse and direct the public mind. But the association above alluded to, was the more important as a movement of the practical teachers,—fellow-laborers in the great work of instruction.

In the year 1847, the association decided to establish a Journal. The plan was to have twelve editors,—one for each month,—four of whom were to be resident editors. For the first year, the resident editors were Hon. J. D. Philbrick, of Connecticut, Thomas Sherwin, Esq., and S. W. Bates, Esq., of Boston, and the undersigned. Long will they remember their honors and their labors,—ten of the latter to one of the former. They watched and nursed their charge during the first flickering year of its existence, and more than once met “in consultation,”—almost to sign its death warrant. But the Massachusetts Teacher lived, and still lives, an honor and a blessing to the profession whose cause it advocates. But several years elapsed before it could earn enough to refund to its early guardians the amount they had expended in keeping within it the “breath of life.” Its influence has been felt, and its example copied “far and wide.” New York, Ohio, Missouri, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois and Connecticut, have followed the old Bay State movement, and they are all laboring with union of purpose for the promotion of common interests, each actively useful in its own sphere, and rejoicing in the success of all the others.

So much, teachers and friends of education in Connecticut,—has been done. But much remains to be done. May we not humbly hope and trust that the good cause is progressing within our State, and that right feelings are beginning to prevail, and wiser plans to be adopted? Let us not falter nor weary in well doing, but rather let us, each and all, press onward and upward in the noble work, and do what we can to make the good old State of Connecticut as noted for her common schools as she is for the beauty of her scenery and the enterprise of her people.

With a “Happy New Year” wish for all our Readers, we bespeak from all, friendly wishes and friendly aid.

CHARLES NORTHEND.

New Britain, January 1, 1857.

WHAT IS DOING FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SCHOOLS
IN CONNECTICUT.

WE are, almost daily, in receipt of encouraging intelligence in relation to educational interests; and we propose, briefly, to allude to some of the good we have witnessed, or of which we have heard, during a week devoted to visiting the schools and friends of education in a few towns, mostly in New London County.

HADLYME. The cause of education, at this pleasant place, has a devoted and judicious friend in the Rev. Mr. Hillard. On Thanksgiving day, he addressed his people on the subject of common schools; and, at his request, we met the friends of education on the evening of Dec. 11th, at which time, provision was made by two districts, to purchase sets of "Holbrook's School Apparatus," and two School Libraries.

EAST HADDAM. Here is an excellent school, of two grades, now under the management of Mr. Lewis and Miss Cone. With a model house, earnest and well-qualified teachers, and intelligent and industrious scholars, East Haddam is taking a high rank. Since our visit, the scholars have raised, by subscription, the sum of ten dollars, for the purchase of a library. The district has also appropriated ten, and the additional ten from the State will procure quite a variety of good books.

WILLIMANTIC. The teachers in this village, and in Windham, are doing a good work. They are not only doing well in the school-room, but striving to improve themselves by holding semi-monthly meetings, for the discussion of matters pertaining to their profession. This is an excellent plan, and worthy of imitation. We were much pleased with the schools of Messrs. Peck and Avery—the only ones we had time to visit. If our Willimantic friends could have one well-graded school, in some suitable location, it would, we think, greatly promote their interests. Messrs. Carpenter and Willard, as committee, manifest much interest. Windham (which includes Willimantic,) is one of the few towns which have printed their School Reports.

PRESTON. The schools at Preston Bridge, and at Poquetannock, under the charge of Messrs. Fitch and Downing, appeared well. The former is kept in a comfortable building, and we were much pleased in learning that an excellent building had recently been pur-

chased, to take the place of the old and inconvenient one now in use at the latter village.

UPPER MYSTIC. At this place, we found a very pleasant and well-managed school, under charge of Mr. J. Allen, Jr.; but were sorry to see so many intelligent scholars crowded into so small a room. It is earnestly hoped that the people here will soon provide a house worthy of themselves, and of their faithful teacher and promising youth. The building now occupied, though much better than many within the State, is not fully adequate to the wants of the school. There is an excellent boarding school at this place, under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Howell.

NOANK. At this pretty sea-side village, we lectured to a large and attentive audience. A visit to the schools induced us to feel that the interest and intelligence of the people would soon lead them to provide better school-house accommodations than they now have. A well-graded school would accommodate all the schools of the village. Mr. Prentice and Miss Wells are doing good service as teachers.

MYSTIC BRIDGE. The people at this beautiful and enterprising village have recently purchased the Academy, for the accommodation of a graded school. Mr. Potter, the excellent principal, was confined to his house by illness, and our brief visit was confined to the pleasant school of Mr. Packer.

MYSTIC RIVER. Here we found a large, attractive and convenient house; and a large and interesting school, at the head of which, Mr. Wheeler has labored successfully for several years. The building and school are an honor to the village.

STONINGTON. We were much interested in visiting the several schools in this place, in company with S. S. Carew, Esq., who, as school visitor, has done, and is doing, good service. The schools were in good condition, and the teachers devoted to their work. Messrs. Maxson, Ely and Strong are faithful laborers in the grammar schools, and Misses Holmes and Brayton in the primary schools. We also made a brief visit to a well-managed and flourishing private school, under the care of Mr. Woodbridge and son. We earnestly wish that the intelligent people at Stonington Point could see that their true school interests would be greatly promoted by the establishment of a good graded school. But few places afford so many inducements for such a school.

NORTH STONINGTON. There are many intelligent friends of Common Schools in the principal village of this place, and, we doubt not, their interest will soon lead them to provide a better location and a better house for the education of their youth. At the close of an evening lecture, a friend of schools and a non-resident land-holder, very generously offered \$100 towards the erection of a new school-house. Carpenters will please get ready for estimates. The house, will surely go up, for the North Stonington people know too much to be content with accommodations inferior to those of neighboring towns.

GREENVILLE. Quite a change has taken place in the principal school-house of this active village since our previous visit. The building, in accordance with the true spirit of the times, has moved upward. The old part has been elevated and a new story made to support it. The building looks "as good as new." The lower room is occupied by the grammar school, under the charge of Mr. Reed, and presents a neat and attractive appearance. The high school occupies the upper room and is under the direction of C. C. Kimball, Esq., an accomplished and successful teacher.

The two rooms are thoroughly finished and supplied with modern desks and chairs. The improvements and alterations have been made under the immediate supervision of W. Coyt, Esq., the efficient Superintendent of Schools in Greenville. One thing more is wanting, friend Coyt, and that is that the renovation should be extended to the building occupied by the schools of the lower grades. When this shall be done, Greenville will be all right—with good school-houses, good teachers, good superintendent, good schools. That such will soon be the case we have not the slightest doubt.

It was our pleasure to visit most of the above places, in company with Gen. Williams of Norwich, who has, for many years, made occasional visits to the schools of New London County. The earnest attention which was, in every instance, given to his appropriate remarks and counsels, and the cordial and cheerful manner in which he was greeted by teachers and pupils, gave ample evidence that his "labors of love," for the good of the rising generation, were not in vain; and, at the same time, made us wish that others would imitate his example, and seek to do good while opportunities offer. No efforts pay so well as those made for the benefit of the youth.

We would not forget to speak of the exceedingly kind and cordial manner in which we were received and entertained, during our visits to the above places. Such kindness as that we experienced will not be easily forgotten.

ITEMS.

Prof. GEORGE R. PERKINS, formerly principal of the New York State Normal School, Albany, has been appointed professor of Mathematics in Iowa University. Prof. Perkins is an eminent mathematician.

Hon. IRA MAYHEW has been elected Superintendent of the Schools of Michigan. This is a good appointment. Mr. Mayhew is the man for the office. He is a good and true man, and our best wishes attend him.

Prof. LARRABEE has been appointed School Commissioner for the State of Indiana. We know Prof. L. only by reputation, and that is such as to induce us to regard the appointment as a good one.

Hon. W. H. POWELL, has been elected Superintendent of Schools for the great and flourishing State of Illinois. A slight personal acquaintance with Mr. Powell, and the good we hear of him, leads us to feel that he will make an efficient and valuable school officer, and do much to advance the "car of education," in the great state in which he resides.

For Superintendent of Schools in Ohio, REV. A. SMYTH has been elected. He is said to be an excellent man, and if he works as laboriously and judiciously as his predecessor, Hon. H. H. Barney, has done, the cause of Common Schools in the "Buckeye" State will not suffer under the administration of Mr. Smyth.

JEWETT CITY. We are glad to learn that this enterprising place has recently voted the sum of \$5,000 for the erection of a new school-house.

NORWICH FALLS. A new and commodious school-house is nearly ready for use at this place, and is to cost about \$12,000. And thus the good work progresses.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES. The calls for School Libraries are numerous, and districts are raising means for procuring books and obtaining the bounty from the state. Thus far Fair Haven and Naugatuck have done the most,—the former having raised \$75, and the latter \$175.

☛ We send specimen copies of our January number to many whose names are not on our subscription list, with the hope that they may be induced to become subscribers. If any such would like to have the Journal regularly will they please give us early notice.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A LIFE TIME, OR MEN AND THINGS I HAVE SEEN: in a series of familiar letters to a friend, historical, biographical, anecdotal, and descriptive. By S. G. GOODRICH. New York: Miller, Orten and Mulligan. 2 vols. pp. 542 and 553.

No writer has made himself a more universal favorite with the young than Peter Parley—famous the world over. The volumes before us will interest the young and the old. In them the author gives plain, faithful and, often, amusing descriptions of the state of things a half century ago. The extract which we have made for our present number, will be read with interest, and will, we doubt not, create a desire to read the entire work. The perusal of the volumes will restore to the memories of those advanced in years, the picture of "long-ago" scenes and customs, while to the young it will afford a pleasing comparison, and between the present and the past. It is certainly one of the most readable interesting works of the day, and we commend it to the favorable notice of all classes.

In an appendix, Mr. Goodrich gives some account of what he terms the "Revival of Education in New England,"—and speaks of those who were most active and efficient in their efforts to awaken a deeper interest in common schools. Of Connecticut's honored son, and long tried friend of education, he speaks in terms of deserved commendation, as follows: "HENRY BARNARD, of Connecticut, has devoted his life to the promotion of education, and has contributed more than any other person in the United States to give consistency and permanence to the efforts of enlightened men in behalf of this great cause. He is eminently practical, and, at the same time, by his various writings, he has largely diffused among all classes, true views of the nature and necessity of thorough instruction, especially in a country where the political institutions rest upon the people."

THE LIFE OF NATHAN HALE, THE MARTYR-SEY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By I. W. STUART. With Illustrations. Second edition, enlarged and improved. 12mo. pp. 271.

Hale was a noble character; he was brave, accomplished, patriotic. In this volume his life, and services, and tragic death, are delineated by a pen that "adorns every thing it touches."

No youth can peruse it without feeling his soul stirred to noble deeds.

AN EXPLANATORY AND PRONOUNCING DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. With Synonyms. Abridged from the American Dictionary of Noah Webster, LL. D. By WM. G. WEBSTER, assisted by C. A. GOODRICH, D. D. With numerous useful Tables. 490 pp. New York: Mason Brothers. Springfield, Mass., G. & C. Merriam.

This is a most valuable book, and it is afforded at a price which brings it within the reach of multitudes who are not owners of the Unabridged Dictionary. The list of Greek and Latin Proper Names, Modern Geographical Names, proverbs and phrases from the Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish, an explanation of the mottoes of the United States and of abbreviated terms, the tables of money, weights and measures, and many other things contained in this volume make it an admirable book for schools, families and counting-houses. We heartily commend it to all who want a good dictionary.

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION. Edited by HENRY BARNARD, LL. D.

The December number of this excellent and able Journal is before us. As usual, it is full of interesting and valuable matter. This is the last number of the first year, making in all, *fifteen hundred pages* of matter,—and such matter as can not be found in any other work in existence. It would seem almost a life-time work for any man to collect, prepare and arrange such a work. Dr. Barnard has placed the public, and friends of education in particular, under weighty obligations in publishing this work, and we earnestly hope he may reap a rich reward.

The December number contains portraits of the late Warren Colburn and Nicholas Tillinghast, and of George Peabody. We have not space for a more extended notice in our present number, but hope to make some extracts for our next. In the meantime, we would urge all friends of education, all trustees of libraries, and all who may desire to have the greatest educational work in the country, to subscribe for Barnard's American Journal of Education.

ROLLO'S TOUR IN EUROPE,—comprising "Rollo on the Atlantic;" "Rollo in Switzerland;" "Rollo on the Rhine;" "Rollo in Paris;" "Rollo in London;" "Rollo in Scotland." 6 vols. 16 mo. By JACOB ABBOTT. Boston: Brown, Taggart and Chase.

These are charming books for school and family libraries. Mr. Abbott is one of the most successful writers for the young, and blends, in an admirable manner, the pleasant and the instructive. We cordially and earnestly commend them to all who may have occasion to purchase books for the young.

COLTON'S GEOGRAPHICAL CARDS. Six in number, and in size each, 22 by 31 in's.

These are at once useful and ornamental. They serve to impart through the eye a clear idea of an island, peninsula, cape, promontory, isthmus, mountain, hill, valley, volcano, river, lake, gulf, sea and strait, and will, in a single hour, give a more definite understanding of the subjects represented than children would obtain from books in many weeks. They should be upon the walls of every school-house, both for embellishment and instruction.

They are published by J. H. Colton & Co., 172 William street, New York, who will be glad to receive and answer all orders.

~~For~~ Want of space compels us to defer several book notices until our next. Our readers will find our advertising pages unusually full, and we would call their special attention to them.

C. M. Saxton & Co. have a very large and miscellaneous stock of works adapted to the agricultural portion of the community.

Messrs. Harper announce their intention to publish a weekly newspaper, and, with their facilities, we presume they will make it worthy of universal patronage. We wish them success.

The publishers of good school books deserve success, and our readers will find many valuable works named in each of our school book advertisements.